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ABSTRACT

A study of two contemporary American novels, told in first-person narration, explored the distribution and function of relative clauses in literary narrative. For comparative purposes, data from oral conversation, 2 written expository works, 6 other novels, and 20 short oral narratives were also considered. Three types of relative clause are examined: relativizations on direct objects (P-relatives), on subjects of intransitive verbs (S-relatives), and on subjects of transitive verbs (A-relatives). Distributional differences between conversational and literary data, forms and functions of the three relative types, and the influence of genre on distributions are discussed. It is concluded that the discourse/pragmatic function of genre may have as much or more to do with determining the particular distributional frequencies of P-, S-, and A-relatives as the informational status of P, S, and A arguments. S-relatives appear to occur in greater percentages in informal discourse; P-relatives occur in greater percentages in exophoric discourse; and A-relatives occur in greater percentages in third-person narrative discourse, oral or literary, that demands interaction among characters and events on a time line and lacks high concentration of exophoric reference. Contains 22 references. (MSE)

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THE DISTRIBUTION AND FUNCTION OF RELATIVE CLAUSES IN LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

Contrastive data from literary narrative, expository writing, and oral conversation reveal functional motivations for the distributions of relative clauses in two types of literary narrative, those from first-person narrators and those from third-person narrators. It is shown that frequencies of relativization on subjects of transitive verbs (A-relatives), subjects of intransitive verbs (S-relatives), and direct objects of transitive verbs (P-relatives) rely upon genre constraints particular to literary narrative broadly and first-person narrative vs. third-person narrative narrowly. Our genre-based functional explanation of the distribution of relative clauses both supplements and in part contrasts with Fox's (1987) functional and cognitive explanation of the distribution of relative clauses in conversation. We show that high exophoric reference in a text, whether literary or otherwise, tends to produce high frequencies of P-relatives. High informativeness in a text, especially in expository texts, tends to produce high frequencies of S-relatives. A-relatives, which create relevance for new NPs through intratextual anchoring, are preferred only in narrative that lacks the functional motivation for high frequencies of P-relativization—high exophoric reference.

INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of this study is to explore the distribution and function of relative clauses in literary narrative, taking as our initial data two first-person narrated American novels: Jim Lehrer's 1992 *Short list* (*SL*) and Stephen McCauley's 1988 *The object of my affection* (*OA*). Data from conversation, two written expository works, six more novels, and twenty short oral narratives are also briefly considered for comparative purposes. This study is a pilot for a more ambitious multi-genre analysis of relative clauses. On the basis of a sample of 1000 relative

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clauses from literary narrative, 273 relative clauses from expository discourse, 118 relative clauses from oral narrative, and descriptions of 92 relative clauses from conversation, we have identified tendencies in the distribution and function of relative clauses, especially within literary narrative, that will be the point of departure for further investigation. In particular, we argue that Barbara Fox's 1987 description of the functions of relative clauses in spoken conversation holds generally for literary relative clauses, but that there are additional complexities in the form, distribution, and function of literary relative clauses necessitated by the context and structure of literary narrative.

In a collection of over 100 relative clauses gathered from transcripts of spoken conversation, Fox discovered equal numbers (46 each) of relativizations on subjects and relativizations on direct objects (the latter termed "P-relatives"). Fox excluded from consideration relativizations on all oblique objects, a practice which we follow in this study in order to facilitate comparison of figures for narrative and expository relative clauses with those for Fox's conversational relative clauses. In a P-relative, as in (1), the head of the relative clause is the direct object of a transitive relative-clause verb:

P

(1) The man [I hired yesterday] is late today.[1]

Of the 46 relativizations on subjects in Fox's conversational corpus, 36 were relativizations on subjects of intransitive verbs ("S-relatives") and 10 were relativizations on subjects of transitive verbs ("A-relatives"). In an S-relative, as in (2), the head is the subject of an intransitive relative-clause verb:

S

(2) There's a woman [who's a mechanic] on my block.

In an A-relative, as in (3), the head is the subject of a transitive relative-clause verb:

A

(3) The man [who bought the cocker] told me where to find a springer.

Fox (1987, pp. 861-62) argues that the overriding functional purpose of all three types of relative clauses in her conversational data is to make an NP referent which is new to the discourse relevant within that discourse. Fox finds two particular functions for P-, S-, and A-relative clauses: 1) to introduce a referent by describing it and thereby make it relevant to the discourse and 2) to introduce a referent by anchoring it to a referent already established and thereby make it relevant to the discourse.[2] The first function is realized primarily by S-relatives. As Fox and Thompson argue in a more detailed examination of the relative clause strategies first explored in Fox 1987, intransitive verbs used as characterization "name habitual attributes or properties or describe features of their subjects" (1990, pp. 306-07). Although there are additional complexities in the form and function of the S-relatives in our literary data, characterization is one of their recognizable functions, as in (4):

S

(4) It had leather seats like these, and it had a rear window [that went up] (*SL*, 1992, p. 52).

The second relative-clause function, of anchoring new referents to referents already established in the discourse, is realized by transitive relative clauses, either A-relatives or P-relatives. Again, although there are additional complexities in the form and function of A-relatives and P-relatives in our literary data, anchoring is one of their apparent functions, as in (5) and (6):

(5) A WM-24 (white male, twenty-four years old) had broken into a substantial house outside Nowata . . . .
A ANCHOR
"The woman [who owns the house] is a big ear-splitting Baptist." (*SL*, 1992, pp. 29-30)

(6) She sat up on the sofa and raked her hair off her forehead with her
P ANCHOR
vermillion fingernails. The eight silver bracelets [she always wore] slid to her elbow with a clank. (*OA*, 1988, p. 10)

In (5), the A-relative anchors the woman to the house, already mentioned in the previous discourse. In (6), the P-relative anchors the eight silver bracelets to she, a pronominal referent in the previous discourse.

Fox (1987, pp. 860-61) argues that the small number of A-relatives (10) and the large numbers of S-relatives (36) and P-relatives (46) in her conversational data result from the typical information flow status of A (subject of a transitive verb), S (subject of an intransitive verb), and P (object of a transitive verb) arguments.[3] Fox finds Du Bois's (1985;1987) hypothesis of a Preferred Argument Structure especially helpful in explaining the pragmatic nature of the skewed distributions of S-relatives, P-relatives, and A-relatives in her data. Du Bois (1985, pp. 347-50;1987) argues that the preferred argument structure in Sacapultec (and probably cross-linguistically) is for each clause to have only one lexical NP. For intransitive clauses, the lexical NP is the S. For transitive clauses the lexical NP tends statistically to be the P, while the A tends to be a pronominal. Figure 1 illustrates these tendencies.

Figure 1. Du Bois's Preferred Argument Structure

S
Lexical NP + Intransitive Verb

A P
Pronoun + Transitive Verb + Lexical NP

Fox, in fact, found in her data that 87% of the As in transitive main clauses were pronominal while 77% of the Ps were lexical NPs (1987, p. 863). Fox argues that relativization on lexical NPs, then, leads to a predominance of S-relatives and P-relatives over A-relatives in conversational English.

On the basis of an initial corpus of 250 literary relative clauses, with equal numbers taken from *SL* and *OA*, we have found that the distributions and functions of P-relatives, S-relatives, and A-relatives in literature present several interesting complications that are indicative of general discourse/pragmatic differences between oral and written communication, as well as suggestive of discourse/pragmatic structures peculiar to narrative. In the next section, we give an overview of the distributional differences between Fox's conversational data and our literary data from *SL* and *OA*. Subsequent sections 1) discuss the forms and functions of the P-relatives, S-relatives, and A-relatives in *SL* and *OA*; 2) compare these results to the distribution and functions of relative clauses in written expository discourse, as well as six other novels and twenty short oral narratives, and draw conclusions from the distributional data about the functions of relative clauses in literature; and 3) consider the influence of general discourse/pragmatic functions *vs.* information flow in determining the frequencies of P-, S-, and A-relatives in various genres.

Distributional Differences between Conversational and Literary Data

Consider the frequency distributions of P-relatives, S-relatives, and A-relatives in Fox's conversational data as compared to the data from our initial two novels, SL and OA:

Table 1: *Frequency of P-, S-, and A-Relatives in Conversational and Literary Data*

	Conversations	Novels
P-Relatives	46 (50%)	84 (34%)
S-Relatives	36 (39%)	88 (35%)
A Relatvies	10 (11%)	78 (31%)
TOTALS	92	250

If the distribution of relative clauses in literary narrative were the same as that in conversation, we would expect out of a total of 250 literary relative clauses for 125 to be P-relatives, 98 to be S-relatives, and only 27 to be A-relatives. However, as Table 1 shows, there are fewer P-relatives and S-relatives in the literary narratives, and considerably more A-relatives, than we would expect.

Supporting our figures is a 1975 study of relativization strategies in both literary and expository discourse by Keenan, which reports percentages for relativizations on subjects (without distinguishing between S-relatives and A-relatives) and for relativizations on direct objects that are approximately the same as those found for our literary data in Table 1, with about twice as many subject relatives (S-relatives and A-relatives) as P-relatives. Keenan concludes that

the higher percentages of subject relatives reflect a cognitive principle of subject primacy. It is this "subject primacy" that Fox's high numbers of conversational P-relatives challenge. Fox speculates in a footnote that the frequency of P-relatives in her own conversational data and Keenan's written data "may differ . . . precisely because anchoring/displaying the relevance of what you are saying to what has been said before, and to the co-present participants/holds much less significance in writing than it does in conversation, and is accomplished in very different ways" (1987, p. 861). We argue here that anchoring, as well as characterization, of referents is just as important in literary narrative as it is in conversation and that relative clauses in literary narrative are just as important for those functions as they are in conversation. Relative clauses could be said to be used in "different ways" in literary narrative and conversation, but the differences in use are as much the result of pragmatic function and narrative voice as they are the result of differences between spoken and written language per se.

Forms and Functions of P-, S-, and A-Relatives

After describing the forms and functions of P-, S-, and A-relatives in both conversation and literary narrative, we will return in the next section to offer a possible explanation for the frequency differences in the distribution of the three types of relative clauses in conversation and novels, as well as other genres and sub-genres.

The forms and functions of P-relatives.

There are three formal patterns in Fox's P-relative data that prove interesting in comparison with the P-relatives in our literary data. First, Fox (1987, p. 860) reports that her P-relatives "tend to use a very low-transitivity, semantically bleached verb," as in the P-relative in (7) with *have* as the main verb:

P

(7) This man [who I have for linguistics] is really too much.
(Fox, 1987, p. 859)

In fact, in Fox's data, have occurs as the main verb in 75% of the P-relatives when the head of the relative clause serves as the subject of the main clause. (Figures for relative clauses with heads serving in other grammatical relations within the main clause are not provided.) Fox (1987, p. 860) comments that have is an ideal verb for establishing a "non-specific" relation between an NP new to the discourse and a participant (lexical NP or pronoun) already known in the discourse. Of the 84 P-relatives examined from our two novels, however, only 6 (7%), three from each novel, use have as their main verb. The relations established by P-relatives in our literary texts are overwhelmingly specific, using verbs such as loved, received, kept, wore, felt, tell, carried, and bought, as in 8:

P

(8) The neurobiologically disordered person [I'd accosted at the party] turned

out to be as I'd expected. (*OA*, 1988, p. 25)

The greater lexical specificity of the relative verbs in our literary data accords with Halliday's (1979) observation that written texts have "high lexical density" and spoken language "low lexical density." Lexical density is measured not only by words per clause but also by the specificity of lexemes.

A second formal characteristic of Fox's spoken P-relatives is that the As within them tend to be pronominal in keeping with the general function of spoken P-relatives, which is to anchor an NP new to the discourse to a participant already established in the discourse and thereby make the new NP relevant. This is also a characteristic of the majority of P-relatives in our literary texts, as in (8) above with a first-person singular pronominal A. Table 2 gives the frequency distributions for pronouns and lexical NPs as As in Fox's (1987, p. 863) conversational data and our two novels.

Table 2: *Frequencies of Pronominal and Lexical-NP As in* Conversational and Literary P-Relative Clauses

	Conversations	Novels
Pronoun	43 (93%)	76 (90%)
Lexical NP	3 (7%)	8 (10%)
TOTALS	46	84

There is a slight tendency for the literary relative clauses to have fewer pronominal As and more lexical NP As, but the tendency is not statistically significant ($G^2 = .48$).

A third formal characteristic of Fox's P-relatives is that their pronominal As tend to be exophoric (first or second person) rather than anaphoric (third person). Without giving exact figures, Fox reports that the 43 pronominal As in her P-relatives are "usually 1st or 2nd person, but occasionally 3rd person" (1987, p. 860). As Table 3 reveals, 61% of the pronominal As in our literary P-relatives are first or second person.

Table 3: *Frequencies of Exophoric and Anaphoric* Pronominal As in Literary P-Relatives

	Novels
1st, 2nd	46 (61%)
3rd	30 (39%)
TOTAL	76

We will discuss in a later section the significance of this distribution as well as some possibly related important differences in the frequencies of P-relatives between our two novels.

Thus, lexical specificity aside, literary P-relatives are formally and pragmatically the same as conversational P-relatives in using primarily pronominal As for anchors to make new

NPs relevant to the ongoing discourse.

The forms and functions of S-relatives.

There are four characteristics of conversational S-relatives mentioned by Fox (1987, p. 859) that are of interest to us. First, they are stative, with be as the main verb in 43% of their occurrences. Second, 68% of the head NPs are indefinite. Third, the referent is introduced in the discourse for the first time by means of the S-relative. And fourth, the S-relative characterizes the new referent. The following exemplifies each of these S-relative characteristics:

S

(9) and he's got a spring [that comes way up] (Fox, 1987, p. 859)

The data from our two novels show literary S-relatives to be frequently highly stative as well. The main verb is be in 31% of the S-relatives, with the difference between the occurrence of be in conversational data and literary data being significant only at $p < .05$ ($G^2 = 5.84$). The heads of S-relatives in our novels, like Fox's spoken S-relatives, tend to be indefinite (70%), with no significant difference between the written and spoken data. Consistent with the tendency toward indefinite heads and stativity, literary S-relatives also tend to introduce participants for the first time to the discourse and to characterize them, as in (10):

S

(10) He said that he had a Smith Corona Typewriter [that was ancient, upright, and in working order]. (*SL*, 1992, p. 41)

In spite of these four similarities between the spoken and the written discourse, there is one additional complexity in the form and function of literary S-relatives. Fox reports no examples of S-relatives with either oblique or possessive pronouns in her conversational corpus. But in our literary data, 15 (17%) of the 88 S-relatives have either an oblique pronoun or a possessive pronoun, as in (11) and (12):

S

(11) I reached out my arm to try and get my balance and slammed into the man [who was walking in front of me]. (*OA*, 1988, p. 30)

S

(12) I picked out a man standing by the window dressed in a Lacoste shirt and cordovan loafers [who seemed compatible with my sexual preference if nothing else]. (*OA*, 1988, p. 24)

In these and other examples like them, it is doubtful that one can clearly distinguish between characterization of the head for the purposes of making it relevant in the discourse and anchoring the head to an already established participant to make it relevant to the discourse. Verbs in these S-relatives with oblique and possessive pronominals are usually stative and

hence characterize the new referent, while the pronouns serve as anchors. Pending investigation of larger written and spoken corpora, we may tentatively conclude that the S-relatives with anchoring oblique or possessive pronominalsIstill relatively infrequent since they constitute just 17% of our S-relativesIresult from the greater lexical density of writing.

The forms and functions of A-relatives.

The A-relatives in our literary data do not tend overwhelmingly to use a pronominal P to anchor the new A head to the discourse. Only 35% of our A-relatives have a pronominal P, as in (13), or some other pronominal, as the possessive in (14):

A

(13) There was an explosion [that miraculously blew him free from the plane]. (*SL*, 1992, p. 19)

(14) Her efforts at dressing up all her second hand clothes to look as if

A

they'd been designed expressly for her was another quirk [that raised skeptical eyebrows among her political friends]. (*OA*, 1988, p. 14)

However, if one includes definite lexical NPs in the figures, fully 63% of the Ps in A-relatives are definite. This figure approaches the 70% definite P figure Fox found for her oral data; however, recall that her corpus included only 10 A-relatives, so the figures could be non-representative of larger samples.

Fox comments of her 10 A-relatives that they have the "function of linking the current utterance to the preceding discourse, using the object of the relative clause as the bridge" (1987, p. 859). Although 63% of the Ps in our literary A-relatives are definite, it does not seem to be the case that the new NPs are linked, or anchored, solely by means of the P. Rather, the new NPs are made relevant to the discourse by what one might call intratextual propositional anchoring, in which the relative clause proposition repeats, paraphrases, or adds to propositions of the narrative.

Note first the almost exact repetition of a previous statement in the A-relative in (15):

(15) The plant would employ 150 to 175 Oklahomans, so it was considered a vital addition to Panhandle Process, Inc., which sounded important and scientific enough. It wasn't until I got there and actually saw the name

A

on the side of the new factory [that would employ 150 to 175 Oklahomans] that I realized the company initials were C.R.A.P. (*SL*, 1992, p. 6)

In (15), the VP of the A-relative repeats exactly the entire main-clause VP of the previous underlined sentence, not just the P. Whatever the implicatorial effect of repeating the VP is, the new factory as an NP is made relevant through intratextual reference to a narrative proposition, not simply through anchoring the head to a previously mentioned P.

The A-relative in (16) does not repeat a previous VP exactly, but merely invokes the previous narrative by collapsing into a paraphrase previous clauses:

(16) I was sitting at the makeshift table on the opposite side of the room reading the World War I diaries of Siegfried Sassoon and eating a fried-egg sandwich. . . . Nina's lower lip was thrust out but I couldn't tell from her expression if she was genuinely upset, so I used my standard tactic for dealing with anything unexpected: I pointed out a water stain on the hem of her dress and passed her half the sandwich. ...

A

I was obviously the kind of person [who could offer a friend in need nothing more substantive than half a fried-egg sandwich]. (*OA*, 1988, pp. 9-12)

In (16), the A-relative makes the kind of person relevant by mentioning a fried-egg sandwich as well as paraphrasing the previous narrative. As in (15), although one of the NPs within the A-relative has been mentioned before, it is the entire relative-clause proposition that serves to make the head relevant to the discourse.

A third type of A-relative found in our literary data does not repeat or paraphrase previous propositions, but instead mentions new information which is merely relevant to surrounding discourse, as in (17):

A

(17) The idea that someone [who'd spent a good portion of her life crusading for reproductive rights] should be unintentionally pregnant sounded crazy to me. (*OA*, 1988, p. 10)

In (17), the narrator does not mention a previously mentioned NP or proposition but merely provides ironic information about the referent of the head of the relative clause given that she has just informed him that she is "unintentionally pregnant."

A fourth type of A-relative in our data provides neither background information, such as repeated propositions or paraphrased previous propositions, nor new information, such as an evaluatory comment on foregrounded narrative. Instead, this fourth type advances the narrative itself in the relative clause, as in (18):

(18) After four years of being on display at the funeral home, the body was

A

sold to a man [who rented it out to carnivals]. It went all over the country, to towns large and small. (*SL*, 1992, p. 26)

As one might expect, the first type of A-relativelexact repetitionland the fourth typeladvancement of the narrativelare the rarest types of A-relative functions in our data. Bernardo argues that the rarity of "next event" (i.e. advancement of the narrative) relative clauses in oral data is a result of the general function of relative clausesl"to construct a 'picture' of the noun phrase referent at a particular point in time in the narrative" (1979, pp. 549-

50). The implication of Bernardo's argument is that relative clauses that advance the narrative are rare because they not only assert new information about the head but also "picture" the referent with information that is not, in a sense, true of the referent in the world of the narrative until it is mentioned.

The influence of genre on the distributions of P-, S- and A-relatives.

Table 1 showed that there are fewer P-relatives and S-relatives and considerably more A-relatives in the two novels than one might expect from their distribution in conversation. As our contrastive data sets stand now, there are a number of differences between the forms and functions of relative clauses in literary narrative and conversation that could be contributing to the different distributions of the three types of relative clauses in these two genres. Although the two data sets differ functionally and formally in that one set is oral and conversational, the other written and narrative, there are also two important similarities between them. First, as one might expect, the conversations are thick with first-person references; both novels we have discussed to this point have first-person narrators. Second, both natural conversation and literature are relatively non-informative, as Biber (1992a, p. 153;1992b) has shown in frequency counts of highly referential devices such as relative clauses across several genres including conversation and fiction. Certainly, there are other genres such as first-person oral narrative that we have yet to investigate; but if we supplement the figures in Table 1 with distributional figures from expository discourse (Finegan and Besnier's 1989 *Language*, Blakemore's 1992 *Understanding utterances*) and novels with third-person narrators (Lodge's 1984 *Small world*, Donaldson's 1992 *The gap into conflict*) as in Table 4, we gain further insight into the distributional patterns of relative clauses across genres.

Table 4: Frequencies of P-, S-, and A-Relatives in Conversations, First-person Narratives, Third-person Narratives, *and Expository Writings*

	Conversations	First-person Narratives	Third-person Narratives	Expository Writings
P-Rels	46 (50%)	84 (34%)	64 (26%)	67 (24%)
S-Rels	36 (39%)	88 (35%)	81 (32%)	128 (47%)
A-Rels	10 (11%)	78 (31%)	1 05 (42%)	78 (29%)
TOTALS	92	250	250	273

In the absence of more varied samples, one cannot speak with confidence of statistical significance. Nonetheless, in this pilot sample it appears that there are three distinct patterns of distributions of P-, S-, and A-relatives across these four genres.

First, expository discourse (in our sample 273 relative clauses from two introductory books on linguistics) exhibits significantly higher percentages of S-relatives than conversation or literary narrative, whether first- or third-person. There may turn out to be a significant difference between narrative and conversation that more data will reveal, but for now we can conclude that this split in the distribution of S-relatives reflects the difference in informativeness between expository writings on the one hand, and conversations and narratives on the

other, as is illustrated in Figure 2:

Figure 2. Continuum of Functional Informativeness and Frequency of S-Relatives

Relatively Informative	Relatively Non-Informative
Expository Writings (47%)	Conversations (39%) 1st-person Narratives (35%) 3rd-person Narratives (32%)

The stativity of S-relatives makes them ideal for the definitions and characterizations that are prominent in informational discourse, such as in example (19) from a linguistics text:

S

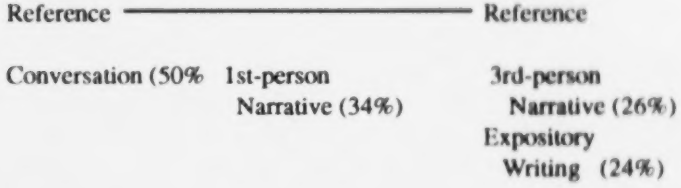
(19) Spanish has a voiceless velar fricative [x], [which also exists in many

S

other languages,] and a voiced velar fricative [ ], [which is less common]. (Finegan and Besnier, 1989, p. 45)*

A second pattern revealed in Table 4 is a scale of frequency of P-relatives, with conversation at one end of the scale and third-person narrative and expository writing at the other end. First-person narrative patterns between these extremes. The data suggest that the scale of P-relativization correlates with what seems to be a scale for frequency of first- and second-person reference. Recall that Fox found ≈93% of the anchoring As in her conversational P-relatives were pronominal and that her pronominal As within P-relatives were "usually 1st or 2nd person, but occasionally 3rd person" (1987, p. 860). Biber (1992b, p. 235) has found that exophoric pronouns (first- and second-person) are about three times as numerous in conversation as in fiction (undifferentiated in his samples for first- and third-person narrators). He has also found exophoric pronouns to be about three times as numerous in fiction as in humanities academic prose, a category within which we consider our expository linguistics texts to fall. Thus, as Figure 3 shows, higher percentages of P-relativization correlate with the amount of exophoric reference in the text.

Figure 3. Continuum of Exophoric Reference and Frequency of P-Relatives



P-relativization, then, favors anchoring the relative-clause head to an exophoric pronoun and will be used relatively frequently in discourse which is highly exophoric. The 16% difference in frequency of P-relatives between conversation and first-person narrative is interesting in that it appears at first as if it also might correlate with a difference in exophoric reference between the two genres; however, the percentage for first-person narrative in Figure 3 is not completely reliable because of a large difference between the initial samples from the two novels *Short list* and *Object of my affection. Short list*, in fact, has what seems to be an unusually low percentage of P-relatives, as shown in Table 5, which also includes for comparison relativization figures for four more first-person narrated novels: Jay McInerney's *Story of my life*, Richard Ford's *The sportswriter*, Nicholson Baker's *The mezzanine*, and Larry McMurtry's *Some can whistle*:

Table 5: *Frequencies of P-, S-, and A-Relatives in Six First-person Literary Narratives*

	P-rels	S-rels	A-rels	TOTALS
Short list	20 (16%)	52 (42%)	53 (42%)	125
Object . . .	64 (51%)	36 (29%)	25 (20%)	125
Story of my life	61 (49%)	30 (24%)	34 (27%)	125
Sportswriter	50 (40%)	42 (34%)	33 (26%)	125
Mezzanine	65 (52%)	27 (22%)	33 (26%)	125
Some can whistle	51 (41%)	46 (37%)	28 (22%)	125

Note from Table 5 that although the P-relative frequency is the lowest among the frequencies for the three types of relative clauses in *Short list*, the P-relative frequency is consistently the highest in each of the remaining five first-person narrated novels. With *Short list* excluded from the list, the average P-relative frequency of the other five novels is 46.6%, a figure very close to Fox's 50% P-relative figure for her conversational data. For two of these novels*Object of my affection* and *The mezzanine*the P-relative frequencies slightly exceed the comparable figure for Fox's conversational data.

We suggested above in our discussion of Figure 3 that high exophoric reference might

correlate with high frequencies of P-relatives. Although it is likely that there are other as yet undetermined factors encouraging P-relativization, random 1000-word samples of each of our first-person narratives do seem to support the correlation of high exophoric reference with frequent P-relativization. Table 6 reports the results of our sampling.

Table 6: *Frequencies of Exophoric Nominative Pronouns in 1000*-Word Samples in First-person Literary Narratives*Compared with P-Relativization Frequencies from Table 5*[5]

	Pronouns	Exophoric Nominative P-rels
Short list	26	20 (16%)
Object . . .	75	64 (51%)
Story of my life	68	61 (49%)
Sportswriter	66	50 (40%)
Mezzanine	53	65 (52%)
Some can whistle	56	51 (41%)

Short list, with the lowest percentage of P-relatives compared to A-relatives and S-relatives, shows in our 1000-word sample less than half (26) of the average number (63.6) of first- or second-person nominative pronominal arguments that appear in the 1000-word samples of the remaining novels.

Tables 5 and 6 support the conclusion that first-person literary narratives vary in the degree to which they are exophorically grounded. Thus, the suggestion is that first-person novels that are sparse in first- and second-person nominative referencelthe preferred pronominal anchors in P-relativesIwill have fewer P-relatives than those first-person novels with heavy exophoric nominative reference.[6]

Two questions remain: why is the percentage for A-relatives lowest in conversation among all genres examined and why is the percentage for A-relatives in third-person narrative higher than those in first-person narrative and expository writing? The low percentage of A-relatives in conversation could be a result of the Preferred Argument Structure effect being stronger in oral language, which would consequently suppress the percentage of A-relatives in conversation. However, it is more likely a genre constraint such as informativeness (which encourages S-relativization) in conjunction with high exophoric reference (which encourages P-relativization) rather than the more cognitively based Preferred Argument Structure that suppresses A-relatives in conversation. This suggestion is supported, for instance, by data from the twenty oral Pear Story English narratives collected by Chafe et al., in which we find the distribution for P-, S-, and A-relatives provided in Table 7:

Table 7: *Frequencies of P-, S-, and A-Relatives in The Pear Stories*

P-rels	28 (24%)
S-rels	44 (37%)
A-rels	46 (39%)
TOTAL	118

These widely-analyzed narratives, told by college-age women, are third-person retellings of a short film involving the theft of a basket of pears. First, there is a considerably higher frequency of A-relatives than one might expect if the Preferred Argument Structure were constraining A-relativization in these oral texts, as Fox argues that it does for her oral conversational data. Furthermore, the relative frequencies of the three types of relative clauses in these third-person oral narratives are very close to those for our third-person literary narratives (compare Tables 4 and 7), though the difference between A- and S-relativization frequencies is not as large in the oral narratives, probably because of the strongly descriptive nature of most of the retellings, which would encourage the occurrence of more S-relatives than A-relatives. It is possible that the difference in planning time involved in the production of literary *vs.* oral texts may have an influence on the frequencies of the different types of relative clauses, but whatever effect planning time may have is dwarfed by the influence of genre and sub-genre. Note again from Tables 4 and 7 that the third-person oral narratives of *The pear stories* are more like the third-person literary narratives than any of the other genres, with A-relatives being more frequent than either P-relatives or S-relatives and with S-relatives being more frequent than P-relatives.

Since the motivations for high S-relativization and high P-relativization appear to be functional, we look to a functional answer to our final question as to why A-relativization is relatively more frequent in third-person narrative than in the other genres we have examined. As we have argued, if a discourse is primarily informational, S-relativization will predominate, as in our expository linguistics texts. For example, the following are three of the first seven sentences containing relative clauses, all of them S-relatives, from Chapter 2 of Finegan and Besnier's *Language: Its structure and use*:

S

(20) Somewhat less obvious is the number of sounds [that occur in the words *speakers*, *series*, *letters*, and *sequence*;]

S

(21) The system [that had evolved in Wessex before the Norman Invasion of 1066]gave us such spellings as *ee* for the sound in words like *deed* and *seen*.

S

(22) The system [that was overlaid on the Old English system by the Normans, withtheir French orthographic customs,] gave us such spellings as*queen* (for the earlier *cween*) and *thief* (for earlier *theef*). (*Language*, 1989, pp. 32-34)

Each of these S-relatives characterizes its head and makes it relevant to the surrounding discourse. In (20), the surrounding context is the problem of identifying the number of sounds in written words since English orthography and English phonemics are non-iconic. By providing inside the S-relative several words whose numbers of sounds do not equal the numbers of letters, the mentioned NP[the number of sounds]is made relevant to the surrounding discourse. Sentence (20) would be obviously non-felicitous if it simply read, "Somewhat less obvious is the number of sounds." Sentences (21) and (22) occur in a list of some of the origins of English orthography. Again, both heads are characterized by the S-relatives and since the propositional content in the relative clauses refers to historical development of orthographic systems, it obviously makes the heads relevant to the surrounding discourse context. The near absence of exophoric reference in the linguistics texts precludes heavy P-relativization. And as we will argue below, only third-person narrative among the genres we investigate in this paper has the necessary characteristics to encourage heavy A-relativization.

If a discourse is primarily non-informational, as are conversation, first-person narrative, and third-person narrative, then new NPs made relevant by means of relative clauses can be said more specifically to be made relevant most often by anchoring to characters and events in the on-going discourse. If the discourse reference is heavily exophoric, as are conversation and first-person narrative, then P-relativization will predominate. For example, in the following two paragraphs from McInerney's *Story of my life*, the first-person narrator of the novel, Alison Poole, reports on her sensory exercise in her acting class:

(23) They told me later that within two minutes I had the teacher watching me and that pretty soon he told everyone else to knock off what they were doing and watch me. I don't know, I was off in my own world, acting. I'm doing something true, I know I'm not just faking it this time and even though it's acting

P

something [I'm not really experiencing] it's absolutely

P

honest, my reaction, the sensations [I'm feeling] and I'm completely in my own reality, it's like dreaming, you know, or like riding when you feel almost like you and your horse are the same animal, taking your best jumper over a hard course and hitting everything perfectly. . . .

P

Something good [that I did for someone] . . . sharp taste. I was combining these two incredible sensations.

P

And I knew it was the best [I had ever done]. It was taking me to a place I'd never been. (*Story of my life*, 1989, p. 47)

Each of the four relative clauses bracketed in (23) is a P-relative, using the first-person singular pronoun as an anchor to make the head relevant to the discourse. There is a fifth relative clause in the second paragraphl"a place [I'd never been]"land although it is a relativization on an object of a deleted preposition, the anchor is the first-person singular pronoun.

We have found in our data that if a discourse is neither heavily informational (encouraging S-relatives) nor exophorically grounded (encouraging P-relatives), it will tend most frequently to use A-relatives to make a new NP relevant, as is the case with both literary and oral third-person narratives. Since the A-relatives in our data most frequently make a new NP relevant through intratextual propositional anchoring, we look to the motivation for intratextual anchoring for the ultimate cause of high A-relativization in third-person narrative. The following two paragraphs, from the first chapter of Donaldson's *The gap into conflict*, introduce the two main characters of the novel, Morn Hyland and Angus Thermopyle, as they appear together in a bar:

(24) It began when Morn Hyland came into Mallorys with Angus Thermopyle.

Those two called attention to themselves because they obviously didn't belong together. Except for her ill-

P

fitting and outdated shipsuit, [which she much have scrounged from someone else's locker,] she was gorgeous,

A

with a body [that made drunks groan in lost yearning]

A

and a pale, delicate beauty of face [that twisted dreamers' hearts]. In contrast, he was dark and

A

disreputable, probably the most disreputable man [who still had docking-rights at the Station]. (*The gap into conflict*, 1992, p. 4)

In (24) there are one P-relative and three A-relatives. The three A-relatives use transitive predicates to make their head NPsla body, a pale, delicate beauty of face, and the most disreputable manlrelevant to the narrative. Each of these A-relative-clause predicates is an important bit of characterization or information within the narrative. Morn Hyland's body and face are described as affecting drunks and dreamers because her beauty is in part responsible for Angus

Thermopyle's and Nick Succorso's rivalry in the novel. But even more immediately, two pages after the paragraphs in (24), Donaldson writes of Morn and Nick, who leave the bar together, without Angus, "They left to become the kind of story drunks and dreamers told each other in the Station's standard morning . . ." (*The gap into conflict*, 1992, p. 6). The third A-relative of (24) anchors "the most disreputable man" to "docking-rights at the Station," since both Angus and Nick have these rare rights and since their possession of them leads to the climax of the novel. A-relatives are used to create links between characters and events in a narrative. Third-person narrative will not use P-relatives predominantly to make NPs relevant simply because the exophoric pronouns encouraging their use are absent. S-relatives will not be used predominantly since they lack the extra object argument which typically helps to create the coherence that narrative demands, with multiple characters and events interacting across often large stretches of time. As we recall from sentences (15) and (16), the most obvious types of intratextual propositional anchoring are performed by those A-relatives that repeat earlier propositions and those that paraphrase earlier propositions. Thus, the intratextual propositional anchoring that is characteristic of A-relatives is functionally heavily motivated within the genre of third-person narrative but not within conversation, expository discourse, or first-person narrative.

CONCLUSIONS

The implications of this study are that the discourse/pragmatic function of genre may have as much or more to do with determining the particular distributional frequencies of P-, S, and A-relatives than does the informational status of P, S, and A arguments. We have discovered three distributional patterns that reflect the sensitivity of relative clauses within both spoken and written genres to the broad functions of discourse: 1) S-relatives occur in greater percentages in informative discourse; 2) P-relatives occur in greater percentages in exophoric discourse; and 3) A-relatives occur in greater percentages in third-person narrative discourse|whether oral or literate|which demands interaction among characters and events on a time line and which lacks high concentrations of exophoric reference conducive to high P-relativization. One of the most interesting patterns that we think worth further investigation is high P-relativization in both conversation and first-person narrative. Theoretically, first-person narrative could use A-relatives primarily to anchor new NPs, just as does third-person narrative. But instead, P-relativization in first-person narratives appears to dominate if exophoric reference is high. This suggests that P-relativization is favored over A-relativization if the condition for P-relativization|high exophoric reference|is present. Our pilot study has, thus, pointed to what appear to be fruitful avenues for future research in the effect of genre on the structures and distributions of grammatical devices like relative clauses that serve to anchor referents to discourse context. Future research will concentrate on including a wider variety of genres, among them first-person oral and literate exposition and first-person oral narratives, in order to test the hypothesis that some relativization strategies are preferred over others even given equal functional motivations.

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NOTES

[1] Examples 1-3 are constructed. All other examples in this paper are gathered from either conversation or writing.

[2] Fox bases the term *anchoring* on Prince's (1981) discussions of the role of "anchors"Iprimarily given informationIin the presentation of new information.

[3] Fox borrows these case role labels from Dixon 1979.

[4] Example (19) is the first non-restrictive relative clause that we have presented. Like Fox (1987), we do not distinguish in this pilot study between restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses. Fox and Thompson (1990, pp. 297-98), who also do not make the distinction in their study, comment on the extreme difficulty of distinguishing between restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses in oral data. In future work, we will consider the difference for only written genres.

[5] We count only nominative pronouns in our samples in order to restrict our counts to ACTOR referentsIthat is, those referents that are likely to surface as As in P-relativesIalthough the ratios would be the same even if we had considered accusative pronouns as well.

[6] We are currently collecting data from first-person detective novels that appear to be much like Lehrer's novel in being sparse in both exophoric nominative reference and P-relatives. The stylistic causes and effects of these patterns await further analysis.

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